

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS

Report on the papers of
S I R F R A N K E. S M I T H, F R S
(1876-1969)

deposited in the College Archives,
Imperial College of Science and Technology,
London SW7 2AZ

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THE ROYAL SOCIETY

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS

Committee on Scientific and Technological Records

CONTEMPORARY SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES CENTRE

Papers of

SIR FRANK E. SMITH, F.R.S.

(1876 - 1969)

Listed by: Jeannine Alton
Harriot Weiskittel

Deposited in the College Archives, Imperial College of Science & Technology 1974
London

Description of the collection.

The papers consist of biographical material, reminiscences and information assembled by Sir Charles Goodeve for his Royal Society Memoir of Smith, and passed on by him. In the course of his enquiries, Sir Charles was able to establish the correct date of Smith's birth (1876), which had previously been accepted as 1879: see copy of Smith's birth certificate in Item 1.

Because Smith died at the advanced age of 93, and had spent much of his career as a scientist in government and industry, no manuscripts or private papers remain.

Summary of the career of Sir Frank Smith.

Note: a full list of Smith's Honours is given in the Royal Society Memoir, p.546

- b. 1876 Aston, Birmingham
- 1884 - 88 Corbett Street Board School, Smethwick
- 1888 - 91 Smethwick Central School
- 1894 - 95 Birmingham Technical School (now University of Aston)
- 1897 National Scholarship to Royal College of Science (now Imperial College)
- 1899 Associateship, R.C.S.
- 1900 - 01 Assistant Demonstrator, R.C.S.
- 1901 - 20 National Physical Laboratory
 - 1901 Assistant to Director, Sir Richard Glazebrook
 - 1909 Principal Assistant
 - 1917 Superintendent, Electricity Department
- 1902 Married Nellie May King (died 1961)
- 1914 - 18 Work for Board of Invention and Research
- 1918 Fellow of The Royal Society
- 1920 - 29 Director, Scientific & Experimental Department, Admiralty
- 1922 - 29 Hon. Sec. British Association
- 1924 - 26 President, Physical Society
- 1925 Hughes Medal, Royal Society
- 1927 Duddell Medal, Royal Society
- 1929 - 39 Secretary, D.S.I.R.
- 1929 - 37 Physical Secretary, Royal Society
- 1934 Faraday Medal, Inst. Electrical Engineers
- 1937 Fellow, Imperial College
- 1939 - 55 Adviser on Research & Development, Anglo-Iranian Oil (later B.P.)

- 1939 - 42 Director, Instrument Production, Ministry of Supply
 1940 - 42 Director of Telecommunications, M.A.P.
 1940 - 46 Chairman, Technical Defence Committee, M.I.5
 1941 - 47 Chairman, Scientific Advisory Council
 1943 - 46 President, Institute of Physics
 1944 - 57 Chairman, Research Committee, B.S.A. (Director, B.S.A. 1947)
 1946 - 54 Chairman, Road Research Board

Contents of the handlist.

1. Memoir, by Sir Charles Goodeve (Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society, Vol. 18, 1972); miscellaneous obituary and memorial notices; copy of Smith's birth certificate; letter re early education in Birmingham.
2. Publications
 'Paul Instrument Fund' (The Royal Society, n.d.), includes note by Smith on Paul's Will.
 Journal Royal Naval Scientific Service, 20, July 1965, Memorial Number to A.B. Wood, includes note by Smith.
3. Correspondence with Mrs. B.M. Fry (Smith's daughter) 1970 - 73
4. Correspondence with friends and colleagues of Smith; 1970 - 72
 - John Buckingham
 - Leonard Cohen
 - P. Docksey
 - Sir William Glanville, CB, CBE, FRS
 - Archibald Vivian Hill, CH, OBE, FRS
 - G. R. D. Hogg, CB, CBE
 - Reginald Victor Jones, CB, CBE, FRS
 - N. A. W. Legrand
 - Sir Ben Lockspeiser, KCB, FRS
 - Dudley M. Newitt, FRS
 - D. A. Oliver
 - Sir Robert Robinson, OM, FRS
 - P. Docwra Rogers, OBE
 - J. E. Rowe
 - P. Vigoureux
 - Sir Charles Wright KCB, MC and Sir Frederick Brundrett, KCB, KBE
5. Printed material relating to Smith's career.
 - J.R.N.S.S. 7, nos. 2 and 4, 1952, contain articles by John Buckingham describing Smith's work during 1914 - 18 War and as Director of Scientific Research, Admiralty
 - Article by R.W. Cheshire, 'The Admiralty Research Laboratory' (Annotated by Sir Charles Goodeve)

6. Sir Charles Goodeve's file, inscribed 'Sir Frank Smith, F.R.S. Correspondence with helpers.'

Notes, bibliography, references, acknowledgments and other biographical information assembled for Smith's Memoir.